Most abaca used for weaving is bought in the northern barrios of Bantolinao and Nasig-id. Several women were furnished abaca by the owner who later received one-half of the cloth.

Fiber to be woven must be stripped from the abaca plant with special care; for example, no pulp should remain on the fiber. Often growers who sell abaca to the Chinese in Siaton poblacion purposely leave pulp on the fibers so the bundles will weigh more.

Dyes

Three vegetable dyes, tagun, taloto, and antipolo, were once used to dye colored weft thread for abaca cloth. Tagun (Indigofera suffruticosa Mill) grows wild in the nearby hills; once in the past it was cultivated as a source of black dye. Domesticated tagun, according to the barriofolk, made a better dye than the wild variety. Water was heated and tagun leaves were added; a little lime was then sprinkled into this mixture and care taken lest the water boil. "If the water boiled," one woman explained, "the dye was not any good because the leaves become tender right away." Bark of the taloto and antipolo trees was powdered to make a red dye. Red fibers were sometimes re-dyed with tagun "so they would be reddish and very shiny." Today these vegetable dyes are rarely, if ever, used. Weavers buy chemical dyes in the poblacion; a package of four different dyes costs ten cents.